

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Amended) A method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) selecting at a first node, a plurality of characteristics which together define a mailing;
 - (b) creating a document and storing said document in electronic form, then directing that said stored document be included in a print job comprising said mailing;
 - (c) creating an address list comprising one or more destination addresses and storing said address list in electronic form and then selecting said stored address list for inclusion in said print job;
 - (d) transmitting electronically said print job to a terminal node wherein said terminal node is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node;
 - (e) receiving said print job at said terminal node; said terminal node for receiving said print job and for directing said print job to a mail production means for producing said mail piece; said mail production means further comprising:
 - (i) a first printer; and
 - (ii) a second printer;
 - (f) printing on said first printer said destination address to an envelope wherein each of said destination addresses is printed to a corresponding envelope;
 - (g) printing on said second printer said document, wherein said document is printed in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node;

- (h) inserting said printed document into said printed envelope to form an unfinished mail piece;
- (i) sealing said unfinished mail piece;
- (j) franking said unfinished mail piece, in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node and with characteristics determined at said second node, in order to form a finished mail piece; and
- (k) placing said finished mail piece into a mail stream for delivery to said destination address printed thereon.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of characteristics comprises:

- (a) a choice of paper. said choice further comprising:
 - (i) a choice of ink color,
 - (ii) a choice of paper color;
 - (iii) a choice of paper size;
- (b) a choice of duplex or simplex printing on said chosen paper;
- (c) a choice of whether or not a reply envelope is to be printed; and
- (d) a choice of how said chosen paper is to be folded.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said each of said destination addresses comprising said stored address list is compared to a predetermined database of correct addresses wherein each address is matched with a corresponding zip code, and if said each of said destination addresses does not match said correct address then said non-matching address is corrected to match said correct address.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein duplicate destination addresses contained on said stored address list are detected by parsing address data contained within each of said destination addresses and to form a file, and then matching each of said files to determine whether any of said files duplicates another of said files.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein a receipt indicative of said print job and delivery into said mail stream is generated by said terminal node and transmitted to said first node.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said first printer and said second printer are co-located within a single apparatus.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein said apparatus is a mailing system comprising:
 - (a) a data processor;
 - (b) a document printer;
 - (c) an envelope printer;
 - (d) a postage meter; and
 - (e) an inserter.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein said terminal node is the next consecutive node after said first node.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein said first node selects said terminal node from among a plurality of terminal nodes.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein said first node selects said second node as determined by said second node being a first available terminal node in accordance with a predetermined order of terminal nodes.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein a second node receives said print job and distributes said print job to said terminal node for production of said finished mail piece.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said second node receives said print job and distributes said print job to one of a plurality of terminal nodes for production of said finished mail piece.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said second node makes said distribution based upon the availability of said terminal node.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said distribution is determined by the location of said terminal node.

15. A system for producing a mail piece comprising:

- (a) first data processing means for selecting a document, selecting an address list, and selecting a plurality of characteristics which together define a mailing;
- (b) transmission means for transmitting said mailing to a second data processing means wherein said second data processing means is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first data processing means;
- (c) second data processing means for receiving said mailing and downloading said mailing to a plurality of printer means comprising a first printer and a second printer;
- (d) first printer means comprising said first printer for printing addresses from said address list to envelopes;
- (e) second printer means comprising said second printer for printing said document to media selected at said first data processing means;
- (f) inserter means for inserting said printed documents into said envelopes to form an unfinished mail piece;
- (g) sealing means for sealing said unfinished mail piece; and
- (h) franking means for franking said unfinished mail piece to form a finished mail piece.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein said second data processing means, said second printer means, said inserter means, said sealing means, and said franking means comprise a single apparatus.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein said first printer means and said second printer means are co-located.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein said system further comprises a plurality of nodes wherein one node is an initiating node and a second node is a terminal node, and, if there are more than two nodes in said system, then said first and said second printer means are located at said terminal node.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein a second node relays said mailing from said first data processing means to said terminal node.

20. Add Claim 20 as follows:

A method of defining and producing a mail piece, comprising the steps of:
selecting at a first node a plurality of characteristics which define a mailing;
creating a document and storing said document in electronic form;
creating an address list comprising one or more destination addresses and
storing said address list in electronic form;
transmitting said document, said address list and said characteristics to a
terminal mode wherein said terminal node is not co-located with, nor under the control
of, said first node;
receiving said document, said address list and said characteristics at said
terminal node and directing said document, said address list and said characteristics to
a mail production means;
printing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding envelope;
printing said document in accordance with one or more of said characteristics
selected at said first node;

inserting said printed document into a corresponding printed envelope to form the mail piece;

providing said printed envelope with evidence of postage payment; and

placing the mail piece into a mail stream for delivery to said destination address printed thereon.

Add Claim 21 as follows:

21. A method according to claim 20, wherein the evidence of postage payment is in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

Add Claim 22 as follows:

23. A method according to claim 20, wherein said postage payment is in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

Add Claim 24 as follows:

24. A method according to claim 20, further comprising sealing said corresponding printed envelope after said inserting step.

Add Claim 25 as follows:

25. A method according to claim 24, further comprising providing the mail piece with evidence of postage payment in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

Add Claim 26 as follows:

26. A method according to claim 24, wherein said printed envelope is provided with evidence of postage payment.

Add Claim 27 as follows:

27. A method according to claim 26, wherein said postage payment is in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

Add Claim 28 as follows:

28. A method according to claim 20, wherein said document, said address list and said characteristics are transmitted independent of one another.

Add Claim 29 as follows:

29. A method according to claim 20, wherein said document, said address list and said characteristics are transmitted concurrently.

Add Claim 30 as follows:

30. A method according to claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise paper size and whether printing should be on one or both sides of a page.

Add Claim 31 as follows:

31. A method according to claim 30, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node further comprise paper color.

Add Claim 32 as follows:

32. A method according to claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise a class of postage for the mail piece.

Add Claim 33 as follows:

33. A method according to claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise whether a reply envelope is to be included in the mailpiece.

Add Claim 34 as follows:

34. A method according to claim 20, further comprising verifying at said terminal node each of said destination addresses comprising said address list.

Add Claim 35 as follows:

35. A method according to claim 34, wherein said verifying step comprises comparing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding correct address in a database containing correct addresses.

Add Claim 36 as follows:

36. A method according to claim 35, wherein one or more of said destination addresses are standardized to match the corresponding correct address contained in said database.

Add Claim 37 as follows:

37. A method according to claim 20, wherein said terminal node provides an indication to said first node that said mail piece has been placed into the mail stream for delivery.

Add Claim 38 as follows:

38. A system for producing a mail piece, comprising:
first data processing means for selecting a document, selecting an address list including one or more destination addresses, and selecting a plurality of characteristics which define a mailing;

second data processing means for electronically receiving said selected document, address list and characteristics and directing said selected document, address list and characteristics to a mail production means, wherein said second data processing means is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first data processing means;

said mail production means comprising first means for printing said selected document in accordance with one or more of said selected characteristics, second means for printing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding envelope,

means for printing said corresponding envelope with evidence of postage payment, and
means for inserting said printed document into a corresponding printed envelope.

Add Claim 39 as follows:

39. A system according to claim 38, said mail production means further comprising
means for sealing the corresponding printed envelope.

Add Claim 40 as follows:

40. A system according to claim 38, said mail production means further comprising
means for providing the corresponding printed envelope with evidence of postage
payment in accordance with one or more of said selected characteristics.

Add Claim 42 as follows:

42. A system according to claim 38, wherein said postage payment is in accordance
with one or more of said selected characteristics.

Add Claim 43 as follows:

43. A system according to claim 38, wherein said document and said address list are
stored in electronic form.

Add Claim 44 as follows:

44. A system according to claim 38, wherein said second data processing means
comprises means for verifying each of said destination addresses included in said
address list.

Add Claim 45 as follows:

45. A system according to claim 44, wherein said means for verifying compares each
of said destination addresses to a corresponding correct address in a database
containing correct addresses.

Add Claim 46 as follows:

46. A system according to claim 45, wherein said means for verifying standardizes one or more of said destination addresses to match the corresponding correct address contained in said database.

Add Claim 47 as follows:

47. A system according to claim 38, wherein said second data processing means provides an indication to said first data processing means that said mail piece has been placed into a mail stream for delivery.

Add Claim 48 as follows:

48. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein in step (h), the destination address information on said document matches said destination address on said envelope if said document contains specific address information.

Add Claim 49 as follows:

49. The system claimed in claim 15, wherein said destination address information on said document matches the destination address on said envelope if the document contains specific address information.

Add Claim 50 as follows:

50. The method claimed in claim 20, wherein said destination address information on said document matches said destination address on said envelope if said document contains specific address information.

Add Claim 51 as follows:

51. The method according to claim 21, wherein said evidence of postage is a permit mail postal indicia.

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Add Claim 52 as follows:

52. The method according to claim 21, wherein said evidence of postage is a postal indicia that indicates the amount of postage that has been paid.